

Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan

Key Points

03/30/06

- The Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan implemented in March 2006 is the result of long and detailed analysis and review. It appropriately applies the intent of the original hiring authority and it sets pay rates commensurate with job duties and responsibilities.
- The AD hiring authority was directed at strengthening the capability of on-the-ground response resources. Firefighters, squad bosses, and crew bosses in the lower 48 contiguous states will see increases of 11 to 15 percent in pay rates. This positive move will enable the fire community to continue attracting and retaining this critical workforce.
- Although several changes are reflected in the AD Pay Plan for 2006, federal retirees can continue to be hired and work under the AD authority with no impact on their annuity. Former employees who took the buyout will be affected until their five-year restriction period has passed.
- The leveling process, conducted by subject matter experts and classification specialists, compared job responsibilities to comparable jobs in the full-time workforce resulting in reduced pay rates for some positions. Such reductions are based on a lack of sufficient responsibilities identified in Position Descriptions to support higher, typically negotiated rates paid in recent years. Subject matter experts are continuing to review documentation concerning some positions where pay rates were significantly lowered.
- Fire response issues are becoming increasingly complex. This, combined with personnel changes in the fire community, may place greater demands on a skilled, temporary workforce. The Administratively Determined hiring authority is just one hiring authority available to meet these changing needs.
- The Administratively Determined Pay Plan for Emergency Workers was authorized for the Forest Service by Congress in 1951 specifically for wildland fire; the authority was granted for the Department of the Interior in 1975 and included all-hazard emergency work. In 1998 Congress authorized the Forest Service to also use the authority for all-hazard emergencies. The specific intent of the AD law was to hire local help on a short-term basis to supplement regular Federal employees in responding to an emergency threatening life and property. Further, the law was designed to pay a casual/emergency hire under this authority at regular rates and without premium payments such as overtime or holiday pay.
- A revision of the AD Pay Plan was prompted by DOI and Forest Service fire directors who collectively concluded that the AD authority and pay plan had expanded beyond its original intent and use. As a result, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Incident Business Practices Working Team tasked three different interagency groups to analyze the use of the AD Pay Plan, its covered positions, and associated pay rates.

- Previous pay plans based four levels of pay (AD-1 through AD-4) on Wage Grade jobs in grades 1-10, and to General Schedule occupations in grades 2-7. The AD rates were achieved by averaging the WG and GS for specific grades. The AD-5 rate was negotiable, however a maximum rate was established, based on intermediate rates ranging from \$21 to \$29 per hour. There was not a consistent computational basis for the AD-5 rate, and no classification for those jobs to determine how they corresponded to the GS-9/11/12/13 levels.
- The 2006 U.S.D.A. Forest Service and DOI AD Pay Plan is located on the internet at: www.nwcg.gov/teams/ibpwt/documents/index.htm